

Planning Ref. No. :	LA06/24
Description of development :	Pursuant to the provisions of Part XI of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and in accordance with the requirements of Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), notice is hereby given that Galway County Council proposes the construction of a new Fire Station at St Lawrence's Fields, Athenry Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway. Proposals include the following: • A single storey, 3-Bay Fire station with training yard • Site clearance works, • A training tower, • A storage shed, • Signage, • Landscaping, • Parking, • Connections to existing services, • Public footpaths. • All associated site development works.
Location :	St. Lawrence's Fields, Athenry rd., Loughrea
Applicant(s) :	Galway County Council
Municipal Area :	Loughrea
Site Inspection :	The site was inspected on 17th of October 2024

Site Description and Development Proposal

The site of the proposed development is a greenfield site located on the north western side of the town off the R380 Regional Road. St Lawrence's Fields housing estate is to the rear of the site, the five-storey Lough Rea Hotel is across the road to the North. The adjoining buildings are single and two-storey houses to the east, west and south of the site. There is an existing pedestrian route to the St Lawrence's Fields housing running along the west side of the site. The overall site is 0.45 Hectares.

Planning permission is being sought for the following:

- A single storey, 3-Bay Fire station with training yard
- Site clearance works,
- A training tower,
- A storage shed,
- Signage,
- Landscaping,
- Parking,
- Connections to existing services,

- Public footpaths.
- All associated site development works.

Planning History

There are no recent planning applications on the application site.

Relevant Planning Policy

Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (GCDP)

Chapter 6 Transport and Movement

Chapter 7: Infrastructure, Utilities and Environmental Protection

Chapter 8: Tourism and Landscape

Chapter 10: Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green/Blue Infrastructure

Chapter 11: Community Development and Social Infrastructure

Chapter 12: Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Chapter 14: Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource

Chapter 15: Development Management Standards

- DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements
- DM Standard 11: Landscaping
- DM Standard 22: Walking and Cycling
- DM Standard 23: Bus Network
- DM Standard 28: Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional, Local and Private Roads
- DM Standard 31: Parking Standards
- DM Standard 33: Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment
- DM Standard 34: Mobility Management Plans
- DM Standard 36: Public Water Supply and Wastewater Collection
- DM Standard 39: Construction and Demolition Waste
- DM Standard 51: Green Infrastructure
- DM Standard 62: Energy Efficiency in Buildings

- DM Standard 63: Sustainable Design and Climate Action
- DM Standard 64: Residential Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement
- DM Standard 67: Sustainable Drainage Systems' (SuDS)

Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024-2030

LSST 15 Community Facilities

Promote the sustainable development of community facilities on suitable lands with a high level of access to the local community, including education, community, civic, public institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses as appropriate.

LSST 16 Provision of Lands for Social and Community Facilities and Services in Loughrea

Support the provision of lands for social and community facilities and services within Loughrea and encourage the provision of facilities suitable for current and future needs of population.

2.5 Community Facilities

Loughrea offers its residents a range of community facilities and services, which include primary and secondary schools, creches, medical centers, a nursing home, a Garda station, a community centre, outdoor swimming, a Post Office and Credit Union services, a public library, playgrounds, sporting facilities, open space and churches. Within Loughrea, there is a range of community facilities and amenities situated in close proximity to the urban core.

Consultations & Submissions

Loughrea Area Office – Consulted - No response received at the time of the report.

Environment - No response received at the time of the report.

Roads & Transportation Unit – Report received on the 28th of November 2024.

Water Services – No response received at the time of the report.

Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht - No response received at the time of the report

An Taisce - No response received at the time of the report.

Submissions / Observations

71 submissions have been received, the contents of the submissions have been reviewed and considered.

The main issues raised are as follows;

- Deficiencies/errors in documentation
- Land Acquisition
- Alternative Sites
- Inadequate Recreational/Play Facilities

The Director of Services for the Fire and Emergency services has submitted a comprehensive report dated the 2nd of December 2004 which addresses all the issues raised in the submissions received including correspondence from Envirplan Consulting Ltd, VHA Architects and Kompan Ltd. A revised layout plan with revised site boundaries has also been submitted. This revision will result in the fence line being moved 4m in a northern direction which will give additional lands for potential recreational/play facilities.

Appropriate Assessment

Accompanied by Natura Impact Statement:	No
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Appropriate Assessment Screening:	Yes
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Within designated site(s):	No
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Adjacent to designated sites(s):	No
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Details of designated site(s) and distance from application site:

- Lough Rea SAC (Site code 000304) - 600 meters
- Sonnagh Bog SAC (Site code 001913) - 8.17km
- Rahasane Turlough SAC (Site code 000322) -10.92km
- Peterswell Turlough SAC (Site code 000318) – 11.35km
- Castletaylor Complex SAC (Site code 000242) – 13.39km
- Lough Coy SAC (Site code 002117) – 14.87km
- Lough Rea SPA (Site code 004134) – 609m
- Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA (Site code 004168) – 4.43km

An appropriate assessment screening report and Ecology Reports were carried out by Planning Consultancy Services.

Screening Determination:

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the conservation objectives and distance from European Sites, it is reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information received (AA Screening report), which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on these or any other European site, and Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not therefore required.

I recommend that the Competent Authority accept the findings of the AA Screening which were carried out by a suitably qualified practitioner. It is considered therefore that stage 2 Assessment is not required.

Conclusion: The Planning Authority considered the nature, scale and location of the proposed development outside and at a remove of circa 0.6 km to the closest European Sites (Lough Rea SAC and Lough Rea SPA). The Planning Authority is satisfied to conclude that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on Lough Rea SAC and Lough Rea SPA European Sites, in light of its conservation objectives. Therefore, a full Appropriate Assessment is not required.

Environmental Impact Assessment

Under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), current government and EU guidance, the Planning Authority must screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and decide if the planning application for the proposed development does or does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

The current requirements for EIA are outlined in Part X of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended and Part 10 of the Planning and Development Regulation 2001, as amended. The prescribed classes of development and thresholds that trigger a mandatory EIS are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

The proposed development does not fall into a class of development contained in Schedule 5, Parts 1 or 2 and therefore the requirements for an EIA can be screened out. Class 15 of the Schedule 5 states that EIA can be required in the case of subthreshold development that would be likely to have significant effects on the environment having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

The proposed development falls below the thresholds, as set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001, as amended) for mandatory EIAR. I have considered the nature of the proposed development and the content of the EIA screening report submitted with this application and concur with the determination that a sub-threshold is not required for the proposed development and that the development is not expected to have significant negative effects on the environment.

In considering the criteria for determining whether a development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, I consider that having regard to the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report, the characteristics of the proposed development and the location of the development and the characteristics of potential impacts there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. Accordingly, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment such that an Environmental Impact Assessment is required.

Planning Assessment

Strategic Assessment (Policy Issues):

*** Note:** This section concerns strategic policy issues and relates to the acceptability of a development proposal in principle. Where a development is considered acceptable in principle in this assessment, this will be subject to normal planning considerations which are considered in the following section.

The site of the proposed development is located in the north west of the Loughrea LAP area and is zoned for development in the current Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030. The site of all proposed dwellings is zoned 'CF – Community Facilities'.

Zoning Description (CF - Community Facilities)



Zoning	Policy Objective	Description
Community Facilities	To provide for civic, community and educational facilities.	To facilitate the development of the necessary community, health, religious, educational, social and civic infrastructure.

The site is a zoned "CF – Community Facilities", within the LAP area. Community developments are therefore, in principle a strategically acceptable, said acceptability in principle is however subject to normal planning considerations.

Conclusion:

The principle of a fire station at this location is acceptable subject to normal planning considerations such as compliance with the relevant objectives of the County Development Plan, Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines and other relevant criteria.

Site Specific Assessment (Engineering & Local Amenity Issues)**Design:**

The proposed fire station will have a floor area of 379.7m² and is located on the east side of the site to facilitate good sightlines for the fire appliances exiting the building.

The proposed building is single storey and the large appliance bay is a steel mono pitched steel structure with lightweight metal composite or fibre cement cladding. The adjoining support areas are cavity blockwork construction, with a central section finished in red brick at the entrance. This raised area is an elevated section marking the entrance and this will accommodate storage of water tanks at high level. The watch room is adjacent to the entrance as well as one office space, to control access to the building. The muster room is behind this and opens directly into the appliance bay and changing areas at the rear. The balance of the accommodation is a canteen area looking to the south and east and a lecture room looking east. The external treatment of the building uses some materials that are common in the area and will link the development on the site to the context overall. There is red brick proposed at the central watch room projection at the entrance to the building and the roadside boundary is a rubble limestone stone wall.

There is a large asphalt hard standing at the rear, to accommodate appliance turning and training. This area is fenced off from the rest of the site with 2m steel palisade fencing. The site boundaries to the site perimeter are 1.2m timber post and rail fence to the west, 2m high blunt top fence to existing adjacent pedestrian access to Lawrence's Fields estate to the south, with the roadside boundary a stone wall 0.7m high. (Local limestone with a concrete capping).

At the rear of the fire station there is a training tower. This is a steel framed structure fixed to a concrete base, similar to the one in the photo, with a 3.1m x 4.2m footprint, one drill face to front of tower, Internal ladders and safety barriers with self-closing gates, Anti-slip sills, drop in barriers Ladders stops, Yellow visual strips, Dummy hoist, rope & pulley Safety mesh to 3 sides, and Anti-vandal mesh and lockable door

Flood Risk:

The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Tobin Consulting Engineers with the application which carried out an impact assessment and concluded that there was no risk of flooding with the site. "Based on this available mapping, it is concluded that the proposed site is located within Flood Zone C and a Justification Test was not deemed necessary for the proposed development. Therefore, it is concluded that predicted flood risk from the examined public body data sets does not prohibit development at the proposed site."

Invasive Species:

Connacht Weed Control carried out an invasive species report and determined that there was no Japanese Knotweed on the site. Montbretia was identified on site, and CWC recommended that should be treated with herbicide three weeks prior to site clearance works.

Roads and Transportation:

The application is accompanied by an Engineering Planning Report prepared by Tobin Consulting Engineers. The proposed development will be accessed off the R380 Regional Road, this section of road has a 50kph speed limit. The available sightlines are in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

The Roads & Transportation Dept have reviewed the application and have submitted a report on the proposed development with *road related recommendations and conditions to be attached to a grant of permission.*

Effluent Disposal:

The site is proposed to connect to the existing public wastewater collection network, a pre-connection enquiry letter from Irish Water has been submitted with the application. The proposed development is feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Irish Water.

Water Supply:

The site is proposed to connect to the existing public water network, confirmation of pre-connection enquiry letter from Irish Water has been submitted with the application. This demonstrates “Feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Irish Water.”

Heritage & Archaeology:

Archer Heritage has carried out a heritage and archaeology Report on the site and have recommended topsoil stripping for the development be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. The report concludes that “There is low potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains at this site.”

<u>Recommendation</u>

I recommend that the current application be Granted Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

Planner's Recommendation:

The proposed development has been assessed within the restrictions imposed by the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and having regard to the policies and objectives of Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030 and the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. Based on this assessment it is considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and with the provisions of the Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030 and the County Development Plan 2022-2028.

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application on the 22nd of November 2023 and in accordance with the revised details submitted and received by the planning authority on the 2nd of December 2024, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. This permission is for a fire station, training yard, training tower, storage shed and all associated site development works only, no other development is hereby permitted on foot of this permission.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

3. Prior to commencement of the development, the applicant shall submit for the written approval of the Roads & Transportation Dept. the detailed design of the elements of the development that will on completion form part of the public road and footpath. This shall include details of vertical and horizontal alignment, pavement tie-in details, cross-sectional details, pavement/footpath, tactile paving, build up details, kerbing details, Road line marking, signage, traffic calming measures, public lighting and surface water drainage.

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian and traffic safety, and in order to comply with national policy in this regard.

4. All surface water generated by the housing development shall be disposed of within the site and shall not be discharged onto the road or the adjoining properties.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

5. All necessary measures shall be taken by the applicant to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris on adjoining roads during the course of the works.

Reason: In the interests of road safety

6. (i) The internal road network serving the proposed development, including turning bays, junctions, sight distances, footpaths, tactile paving's and kerbs shall be in accordance with the detailed requirements of the planning authority for such works, and shall comply in all respects with the provisions of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

(ii) The applicant shall amend the proposed vehicular access arrangements onto the R446 in order to comply with Priority Junction tightening measures in accordance to Advice Note No.6 DMURS.

Reason: In the interest of pedestrian and traffic safety, and in order to comply with national policy in this regard.

7. No development shall commence until such time as the developer has obtained a Connection Agreement from Irish Water for the provision of water services (public mains & public sewer) necessary to enable the proposed development.

Reason: In the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

8. All electricity, telephone, television, public lighting and other cables shall be laid underground in ducting in the public footpath or verge. In this regard, ducting shall be provided to facilitate the provision of broadband infrastructure within the proposed development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

9. Construction on site shall be limited to between 0800 hours and 1800 hours, Monday to Saturday inclusive, excluding bank holidays.

Reason: To protect local amenities and in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

10. The developer shall ensure that all construction operations are carried out in a manner such that air emissions, dust, odour, litter or other waste/debris do not result in significant impairment of, or significant interference with, amenities and environment beyond the site boundary.

Reason: In the interests of proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11. All boundary walls facing open spaces shall be finished in local stone.

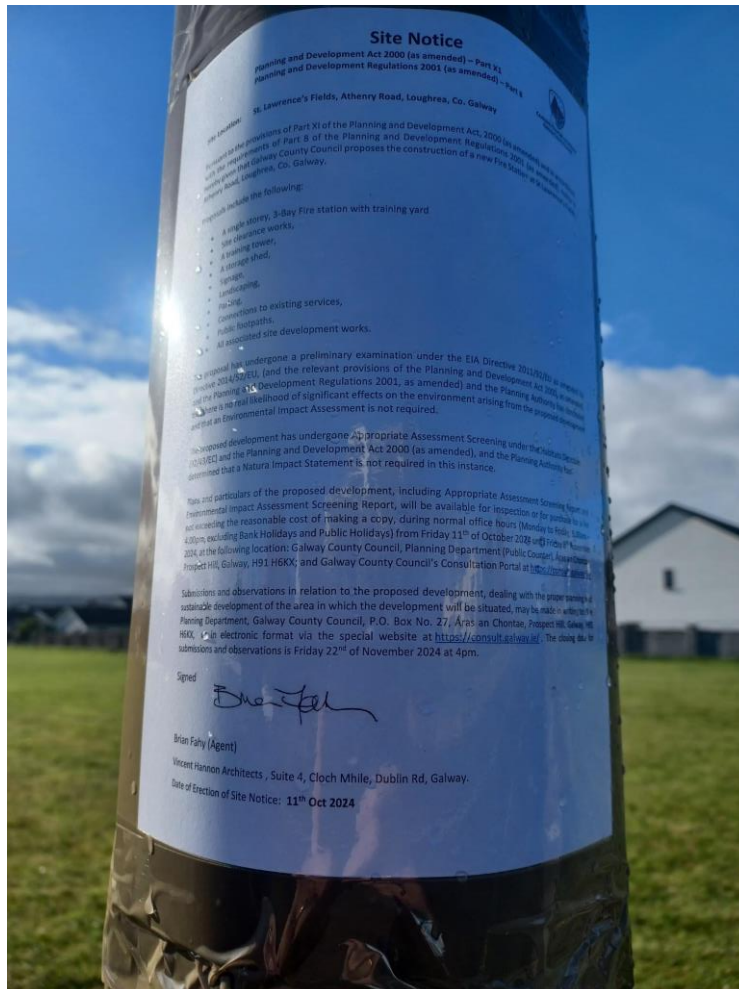
Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

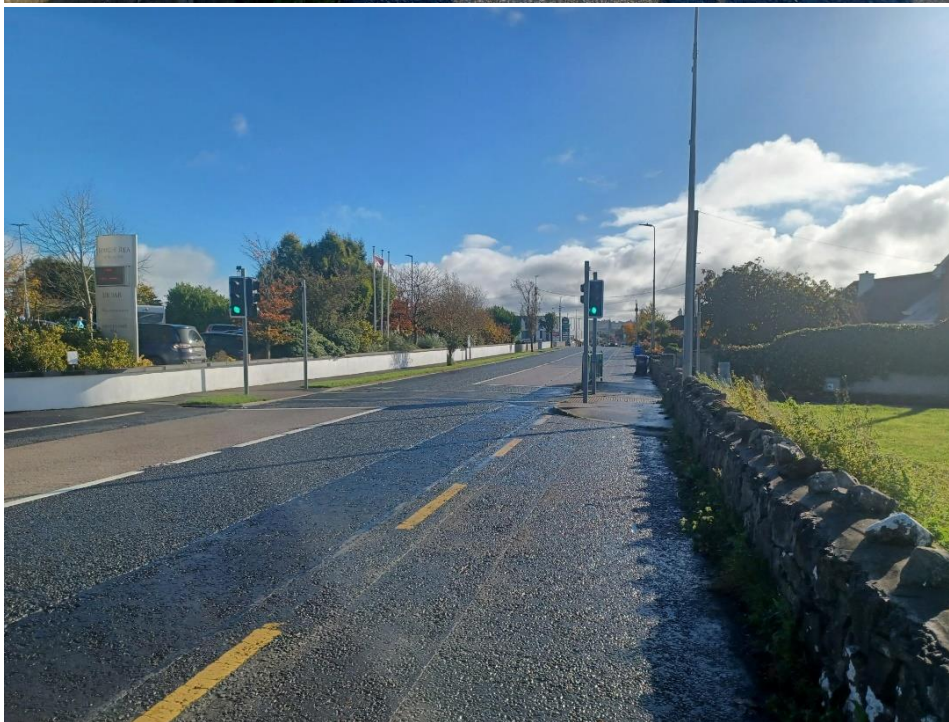


Tara Quinn, Executive Planner (03/12/2024)

Director's\Manager's Recommendation

Decided By: Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services























Galway County Council



Date: 02nd December 2024
To: Valerie Loughnane
Cc: Tara Quinn, Paul Duffy
From: Uinsinn Finn
Re: Response on Submissions under LA06/24

Dear Valerie

I refer to the submissions made under public consultation LA06/24 regarding the proposed construction of a new fire station in Loughrea, County Galway.

1. Deficiencies/Errors in Documentation:

Submission: -The planning documents contain errors and outdated references, leading to confusion. For instance, the site layout plans include an "expansion zone" and refer to an outdated local area plan and the AA Screening Report included in Appendix A and site layout that was different to the layout plan for the proposed development.

Response: - While the Atlantic Troy Ltd. submission raised concerns about inaccuracies in the planning documents, particularly the inclusion of an outdated site layout plan in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, the accompanying clarification from Enviroplan Consulting Ltd. confirms that these discrepancies did not affect the report's conclusions. The changes to the site layout, such as the removal of a rear access route, were considered in the updated screening, and the findings remain consistent—there are no significant effects or impacts on the Lough Rea SAC and SPA.

Concerns were also raised regarding references to the outdated 2012-2022 Local Area Plan (LAP) rather than the updated 2024-2030 LAP in the planning documents for the proposed fire station. However, a clarification letter from Vincent Hannon Architects confirms that any changes between the draft and adopted versions of the 2024 LAP have no impact on the conclusions of the Architects Design Statement included in the application.

In relation to the submission in relation the site layout plan including an expansion zone. There is no expansion zone on the site layout plan or in any other drawings or documents and it is not part of the proposed development.

2. Land Acquisition

Submissions: - raised concerns about the terms of the original land acquisition, suggesting an obligation on the Council to maintain the site as public open space.

Response: The land in question is registered to Galway County Council without any burdens on the title registration regarding its use or future use.

3. Alternative Sites

Submission: - from Atlantic Troy Ltd. proposes a 1.05-acre site near the Loughrea bypass, zoned for industrial use, as an alternative location for the new fire station, citing potential advantages such as reduced response times, minimal noise and traffic impacts, and greater accessibility.

Response: - Galway County Council has thoroughly assessed the selected site and remains confident in its suitability. The chosen location meets all operational requirements for a modern fire station, including close proximity to Loughrea Town, accessibility to main roads for emergency response, and availability of essential utilities. The planning and design process for this site has been in development for several years and is now at an advanced stage under the Part 8 process.

4. Inadequate Recreational / play facilities

Submission: - Concerns were raised in multiple submissions about the inadequacy of recreational facilities, playgrounds, and public amenities in the area, with claims that the proposed fire station would reduce the available space for these purposes.

Response: - The total green space at this location is approximately 0.522 hectares (1.3 acres). The proposed fire station development will utilise only a portion of this area, leaving approximately a quarter of an acre designated as open space to the rear, as indicated on the Site Layout Plan. Importantly, this development does not preclude future enhancements, such as playgrounds or recreational facilities, at St. Laurence Fields.

In response to the submissions, we have assessed the potential for incorporating such facilities in the remaining green space. A report by Kompan Ltd. provides an indicative design demonstrating how recreational amenities could be accommodated in the open space outside the fire station's development footprint.

However, notwithstanding the above, we propose amending the fire station's rear boundary by moving the fence line 4 meters northward. This adjustment will increase the open space from approximately a quarter of an acre to roughly a third of an acre, further enhancing the potential for recreational use. This revision is detailed in the attached Amendment – Revised Site Boundary drawing on the Site Layout Plan.

Recommendation:

In the Chief Executive Report under Section 179 (3) of the Planning and Development Act 2001 as amended, we recommend that the fence line of the proposed fire station be moved 4m in a northern direction to give additional lands for potential recreational / play facilities as outlined on the attached Site Layout Plan. This constitutes a modification under Section 179 (3) (b) (v) of the Planning and Development Act 2001.



Uinsinn Finn
Director of Services
Physical Infrastructure, Fire and Emergency Services & Climate Change
Galway County Council



Planning Section,
Galway County Council,
Prospect Hill,
Galway.

27th of November 2024

Re: Loughrea Fire Station Access

A Chara,

We are aware that a Part 8 planning application is currently being sought seeking permission for a Fire Station and associated works at St Lawrencesfields, Loughrea, Co. Galway, under reference number LA06/24. It is noted that in 2022 a Part 8 was previously applied under planning reference number LA 06/22, this application was accompanied by an AASR prepared by Planning Consultancy Services (now known as Enviroplan Consulting Ltd.) by Consultant Ecologist, Colette Casey (BSc).

As per the 2024 application a change of access has been proposed, this entails the removal of a rear access route. This change to the site layout was considered as part of the updated Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted as part of the 2024 application. In this regard, we would be of the opinion that the proposed development would not result in significant effects/impacts on the Lough Rea SAC & SPA, therefore the findings of the 2024 screening report remain the same.

Yours faithfully,

Colette Casey
Consultant Ecologist,
BSc (Hons)

Note: The preliminary advice set out in this letter merely represents the opinion of the author and is based on the best available information at the time of writing. All relevant planning and ecological requirements and development potential pertaining to the site will ultimately be decided by the Planning Authority and/or the statutory planning process/judicial review. There are inherent risks in any planning application.



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Planning Department
Aras an Chonrae,
Galway Co. Co.
Prospect Hill,
Galway.

Date 25-11-24

Re : Proposed Fire Station at Athenry Road, Loughrea

Regarding the Part VIII planning submission for the above project, we confirm that any changes in the adopted LAB (if any), from the Draft LAP to the adopted Loughrea Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030, has no impact on the conclusions of the Architects Design Statement submitted with the application,

We hope that this is satisfactory,

Regards,

Brian Fahy Barch MRIA

Potential Playground
St Laurences Fields
Loughrea
Co. Galway

Kompan Ltd - November 2024







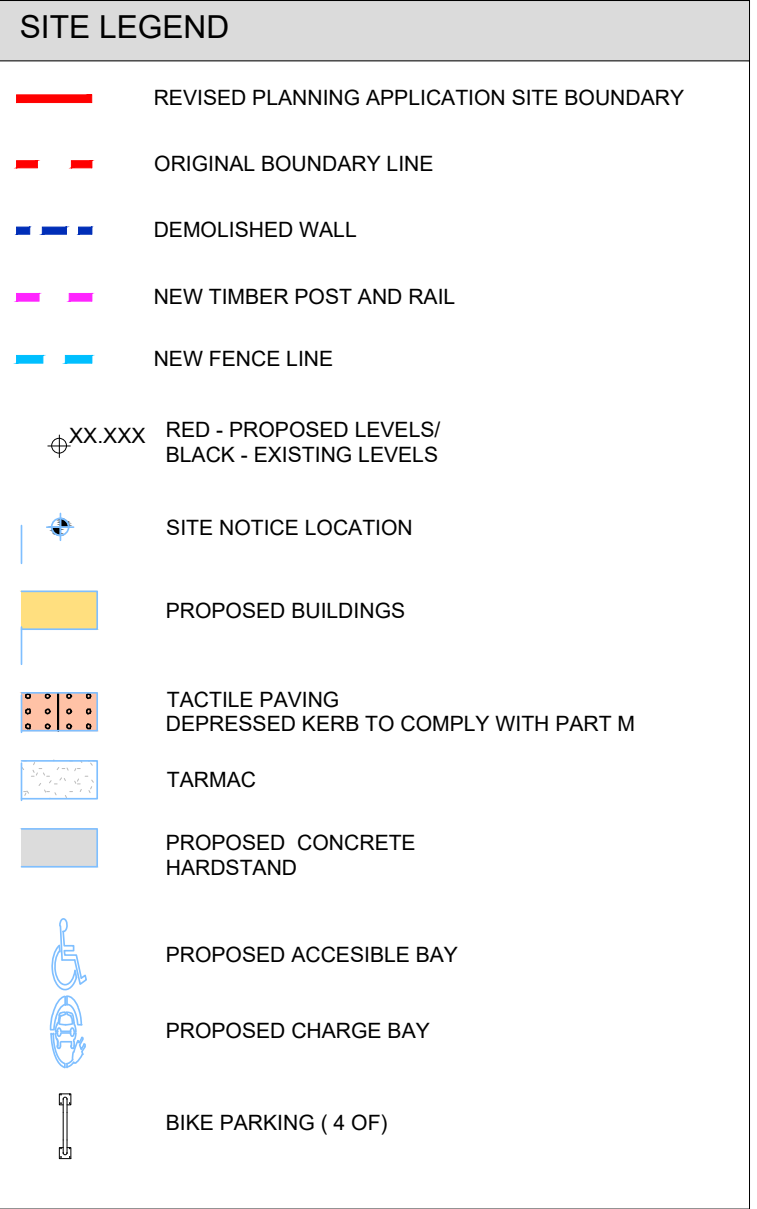












A		Boundary adjustment		WS		27/07/2024	
0		Issued for Planning (Part VIII)		JPM		17/11/2024	
Rev		Description		By		Date	
 VINCENT HANNON ARCHITECTS E: info@vha.ie		SLIGO		GALWAY		DUBLIN	
		Second Floor/Hanson Building Doory Park Road Sligo, F91 7T02		Suite 4, Oach Mills, Duffin Road, Galway, H91 1Y7E		81 Armiens Street DUBLIN 1, D01 N025	
		071 915 9022		091 483 934		01 678 4600	
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		Project:		LOUGHREA FIRE STATION			
		Description:		SITE LAYOUT PLAN		Scale:	
						As indicated	
Status:		Pro No:	Drawing No:		Rev:		
P3		211109	LFS- DR - VHA - AR - 1101		A		
Date:		19 June 2024	Drawn by:	JPM	Checked by:	BF	